

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 307271

NODIS
CHEROKEE

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 11053 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
CAIRO DEC 23.
QUOTE S E C R E T TEL AVIV 11053

EXDIS -- HANDLE AS NODIS CHEROKEE --

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM LEWIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EG, US, IS
SUBJ: DAYAN'S VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR BEGIN-SADAT MEETING

REF: (A) CAIRO 22603, (B) STATE 305829

SUMMARY: DAYAN IS APPREHENSIVE ABOUT SUNDAY'S MEETING,
STRONGLY AFFECTED BY WEIZMAN'S DISCOURAGING REPORT ON
HIS SECOND MEETING WITH SADAT. (FROM WHAT DAYAN TOLD
ME. WEIZMAN'S REPORT CLOSELY PARALLELED THAT GIVEN BY
SADAT TO AMBASSADOR EILTS WHICH IS SUMMARIZED IN REF A.

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I AM SEEING WEIZMAN LATER TODAY, DECEMBER 23, FOR HIS
FIRST-HAND VERSION.) DAYAN REMAINS VERY PESSIMISTIC
THAT HUSSEIN CAN BE BROUGHT INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND
HE SEES NO WAY TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT THE WEST BANK AND
GAZA UNLESS THIS TAKES PLACE. HE SAYS BEGIN HAD NO
DYKJWQULTY GETTING CABINET SUPPORT FOR HIS PROPOSALS,
PARTICULARLY AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT

REFINED AND HE SAYS IMPROVED. BUT CABINET DEBATE CLEARLY SIGNALLED TO BEGIN THAT ANY FURTHER CONCESSIONS WHICH MIGHT BE REQUIRED IN COURSE OF NEGOTIATION WOULD RECEIVE MUCH MORE CAREFUL SCRUTINY. DAYAN SAYS CABINET WAS UNWILLING GIVE BEGIN CARTE BLANCHE FOR FURTHER CONCESSIONS AND SHOWED SIGNS OF WANTING TO KEEP CLOSER REIN ON HIS DRAMATIC NEGOTIATING STYLE IN FUTURE STAGES. DAYAN'S OVERRIDING CONCERN REMAINS QUESTION OF WHETHER SADAT WOULD INDEED GO ALL THE WAY TO SIGN SEPARATE PEACE IN EVENT BEGIN MADE SATISFACTORY "DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES" BUT HUSSEIN AND ASSAD REMAINED UNWILLING TO JOIN NEGOTIATION. HE ALSO TRIED TO PROBE WHAT U.S. POSITION WOULD BE IN SUCH AN EVENTUALITY. END SUMMARY

1. I HAD TWO -HOUR FRANK DISCUSSION WITH DAYAN THIS MORNING, DECEMBER 23, ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR SUNDAY'S BEGIN-SADAT MEETING. HE IS CLEARLY VERY APPREHENSIVE, AND DOES NOT CONCEAL HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH THE "TELEVISION DIPLOMACY" IN WHICH SADAT AND BEGIN HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ENGAGED. HE WAS UNEASY ABOUT WHAT HE INTERPRETS TO HAVE BEEN SADAT'S RECENT CHANGES OF POSITION, AND SENSES A DANGER THAT SADAT IS PREPARING SOME KIND OF TRAP FOR BEGIN. THE TRAP WOULD APPARENTLY BE THAT SADAT WOULD OBTAIN FROM BEGIN THE BROAD DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES HE IS SEEKING BY HOLDING OUT SECRET

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THE PROSPECT FOR AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE TREATY. HOWEVER, ONCE THE DECLARATION HAD BEEN MADE, HUSSEIN WOULD STILL REFUSE TO ENTER THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, AND SADAT WOULD THEN SAY HE COULD NOT GO THROUGH WITH A SEPARATE PEACE TREATY IN LIGHT OF THE ABSENCE OF FINAL AGREEMENT ON THE OTHER FRONTS. DAYAN ALSO SUSPECTS THAT THE US WOULD BACK SADAT IN SUCH A POSITION. I COMMENTED THAT ONE COULD CERTAINLY NOT EXCLUDE SUCH A SCENARIO, BUT THAT IT WAS CONTRARY TO WHAT SADAT HAD BEEN SAYING TO US ABOUT HIS INTENTIONS ONCE A SATISFACTORY DECLARATION HAD BEEN MADE BY BEGIN.

2. DAYAN DESCRIBED THE CABINET MEETING YESTERDAY AS LONG BUT NOT PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR BEGIN. THE WEST BANK AND SINAI PROPOSALS DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON HAVE BEEN, HE SAID, SOMEWHAT FURTHER REFINED AND IMPROVED. THE CABINET AUTHORIZED BEGIN TO PRESENT THEM TO SADAT WITHOUT DISSENT. HOWEVER, THERE WAS A GROWING FEELING THAT BEGIN SHOULD BE KEPT ON A SOMEWHAT SHORTER LEASH. DAYAN SAID THAT THE CABINET MEETING MADE CLEAR TO BEGIN THAT IF HE GOES BEYOND THE PROPOSALS AS NOW APPROVED, HE WILL HAVE TO CHECK EVERY MOVE VERY CARE-

FULLY WITH THE CABINET; ALTHOUGH THESE DOCUMENTS REMAIN CLEARLY AND OFFICIALLY "NEGOTIATING POSITIONS," NOT ANYTHING TO BE PRESENTED ON A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" BASIS, DAYAN SEES LITTLE NEGOTIATING ROOM IN THE WEST BANK PROPOSAL.

3. DAYAN ASKED SEVERAL TIMES WHETHER I THOUGHT SADAT WOULD WANT TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT THE DETAILS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA ARRANGEMENT. I TOLD HIM IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT SADAT DID NOT WISH TO GET INTO THESE DETAILS, BUT THAT RATHER HE WAS CONCENTRATING ON THE NEED FOR THE GENERAL DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AFTER WHICH HE COULD CONCENTRATE ON NEGOTIATING ABOUT EGYPT'S DIRECT CONCERNS. DAHYAN SAID HE HOPED THIS WAS THE CASE,
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FOR HE COULD NOT SEE HOW SADAT COULD REACH ANY AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL ON THE WEST BANK ARRANGEMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF HUSSEIN AND OF ANY PALESTINIAN ARAB REPRESENTATIVES. HE REMAINS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ANYONE'S BEING ABLE TO PERSUADE HUSSEIN TO ENTER THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS; NONETHELESS, HE HOPES THAT SADAT WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE HIM TO DO SO AFTER THE ISMAILIA MEETING AND WOULD WELCOME ANY PERSUASION WE CAN APPLY TO HUSSEIN IN THIS DIRECTION. DAYAN MADE CLEAR THAT THE REVISED VERSION OF THE WORKING PAPER IS MORE SPECIFIC IN ITS REFERENCES TO JORDAN, AND THAT BEGIN'S INTENTION IS TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT ANY AND ALL ASPECTS OF HIS PROPOSALS WITH HUSSEIN AND ACCEPTABLE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABS IF THEY CAN BE INDUCED TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

4. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHETHER ISRAEL MIGHT DECIDE TO SET UP THE "SELF-RULE" REGIME IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA UNILATERALLY SHOULD HUSSEIN REMAIN OUTSIDE THE NEGOTIATION, DAYAN SAID IT WAS REMOTELY POSSIBLE BUT HE THOUGHT HIGHLY UNLIKELY. WITHOUT AGREEMENT WITH HUSSEIN AND SOME PALESTINIAN ARAB REPRESENTATIVES, HE DOUBTED WHETHER THE INHABITANTS OF THE REGION WOULD COOPERATE TO ELECT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, AND THAT THEREFORE IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO IMPOSE THIS SOLUTION UNILATERALLY. IF SADAT SUPPORTED IT, THERE MIGHT BE SOME CHANCE, AT LEAST IN GAZA, BUT HE FELT THAT WAS DEFINITELY A LONG SHOT.

5. DAYAN WAS PARTICULARLY TROUBLED BY WHAT HE HAD HEARD FROM EZER WEIZMAN ABOUT THE LATTER'S MEETINGS WITH SADAT THIS WEEK. IN PARTICULAR, SADAT HAD BRUSHED ASIDE WEIZMAN'S REFERENCES TO DEMILITARIZATION OF THAT
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PORTION OF THE SINAI EAST OF THE PASSES, APPARENTLY INSISTING ON EGYPT'S RIGHT TO DEPLOY ITS FORCES ANYWHERE WITHIN ITS SOVEREIGN TERRITORY. SINCE THIS DIRECTLY CONTRADICTED WHAT BEGIN HAD UNDERSTOOD FROM SADAT DURING THEIR CONVERSATION IN JERUSALEM, IT WAS A PARTICULARLY TROUBLING SIGNAL FOR DAYAN THAT SADAT'S POSITIONS ON KEY ISSUES SEEMED TO BE CHANGING ALMOST DAILY. (WEIZMAN WENT INTO THIS IN MUCH MORE DETAIL DURING OUR CONVERSATION LATER IN THE DAY -- SEE SEPTTEL.)

6. DAYAN SAID THAT BEGIN HAD INITIALLY ASKED DABINET- FOR AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE WHOMEVER HE WISHED TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE MEETING ON CHRISTMAS DAY WITH SADAT. INDICATIVE, HOWEVER, OF THE CABINET'S DESIRE TO KEEP HIM ON A SOMEWHT SHORTER LEASH, THIS DISCRETION WAS REFUSED. BEGIN HAD WANTED TO TAKE BOTH SHARON AND YADIN; THE NRP CABINET MEMBERS INSISTED HOWEVER THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE IF HE DID SO. EVENTUALLY, THE DECISION WAS TO TAKE ONLY DAYAN AND WEIZMAN, PLUS TECHNICAL ADVISERS. (IN DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT LATER WITH WEIZMAN, HE SAID THAT BOTH HE AND DAYAN HAD RECOMMENDED TO BEGIN THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MEET ALONE WITH SADAT RATHER THAN WITH A DELEGATION. BOTH WERE CONCERNED BY THE THREAT OF A DEADLOCK WHICH SEEMED TO LOOM AS A RESULT OF WEIZMAN'S CONVERSATIONS IN ISMAILIA, AND BOTH BELIEVED THAT IT COULD BEST BE AVOIDED BY A PRIVATE MEETING.)

7. OUR CONVERSATION ENDED ON A SOMEWHAT MORE HOPEFUL NOTE. DAYAN IS MORE THAN AWARE OF THE CRUCIAL NATURE OF SUNDAY'S MEETING, AND IMPLIED THAT HE BELIEVED BEGIN MIGHT BE PREPARED TO MAKE SOME CHANGES IN THE DRAFT DECLARATION TO MEET SADAT'S REQUIREMENTS. HE IS PESSIMISTIC BY NATURE, AND IS CLEARLY EXTREMELY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE CLIMACTIC CHARACTER OF THIS FORTH-
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COMING ENCOUNTER. I WISHED HIM A GREAT DEAL OF LUCK. LEWIS UNQUOTE VANCE

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